

LIGHTNING AROUND

A somewhat more frequent fanzine in PDF format

Early October 2003

BACK FROM THE BLACK...

As this is written, we've just been recovering from the massive blackout that hit the Northeastern US and large bits of Canada.

Unfortunately, since we had been hoping to get some money from sales the two weekends before Labor Day to afford to go to Worldcon, and since that didn't happen, we will not be there.

I am highly disappointed. Unfortunately, I am not surprised. The economy has been in the dumpster since before 9/11/01, and President Shrubby is mind-locked on tax cuts as the panacea that will cure all ills.

Thing is, tax cuts are all well and good if there are people with jobs to get tax cuts. And there ain't no jobs out there.

And so, the feeding frenzy starts among the Democrats, jockeying for position to take on a (possibly misperceived) vulnerable sitting President.

Ain't we got fun, eh?



BURNING DOWN THE HOUSE...

Megan's job went away, at the whim of a renegade Board of Trustees of the non-profit she worked for, and they also tried to deny her unemployment benefits and workers' compensation.

NUMBER FIVE

Despite what we've been told by every agency we've been to, whether or not they can do it, they have done it.

So, sometime within the next couple of months, we'll be out of this house.

Be that as it may...

We are still together, still working as a team, and neither of us is dead or bleeding.

I call that progress after twenty years of marriage.

(I was tempted to say "twenty-odd years — and some of them were very odd", but I restrained myself heroically.)



LIKE A RED-HEADED STEP-CHILD...

I have never thought myself to be fortune's favorite, the proverbial "golden child" who could do no wrong.

But the way I've been treated lately by circumstances, I begin to wonder what ghods I've offended, and whether to change my name to Job.

Non-rational? Perhaps so. But I think it understandable, under the circumstances.

Then again, there is the con-

ceit I've expressed many times before to Megan, and I may have also done so in my fanwriting — Megan and I are God's favorite sitcom, and it's always sweeps.

This somewhat parallels the quote of a friend of mine — "I don't watch soap operas; I live in one." From my point of view, the plotting of most soaps is pedestrian compared to the darkride coaster his life takes.

When it comes down to it, that formulation would explain quite a lot.

I'm almost certain you — the reader — know what this means from personal experience. I sincerely doubt your own life has been so humdrum and routine that watching grass grow could be considered "thrilling entertainment".

And may whatever ghod you honor have mercy on your soul.



OUTDATED
CALIFORNIA
ELECTION
JOKES
DELETED

REMAINDER
OF THIS
SPACE
DELIBERATELY
LEFT
BLANK

(COUNT YOUR
BLESSINGS...)

FORWARD — INTO THE PAST!

Recently, I found out the high school I graduated from, Archbishop Curley High School in Baltimore, Maryland, now had a website up.

{A note: this is not the only high school I attended — it's just the one I graduated from.}

Since my 30th anniversary of graduation is coming up next year, I thought it about time to let them know where I could be found.

I found out a few other things that were not immediately gratifying... like the fact that Mr. Tagliarona, known as Coach Tag, had shuffled off this mortal coil. It was Mr. Tag who had started calling me "Shotgun" in PhysEd classes, and whose favorite assessment of my athletic abilities was this: "Brutal."

I'm almost certain he meant it to inspire me to greater heights, but I was already about as high as I was going to get on the athletic pecking order.

And also, this set me to thinking back on my whole high school experience, with the Jesuits at St. Ignatius College Prep in Chicago as well as at Curley.

After much reflection, I definitely have to say that I'm happy as hell I'm not a teenager anymore. In fact, the time between the ages of thirteen and twenty-six were some of the least rememberable times of my life.

Please note: I use the word in a very precise manner. Those years were quite memorable... and the memories from those times are some of the last things I want to remember. Hence, "least rememberable".



FAN DANCERS...

The current state of the world (con) doesn't seem to me to be a promising one...

Travel is getting screwy, thanks to the Homeland Insecurity Department, life is getting more dangerous, thanks to Attorney General Ashcan, and money is getting scarcer and scarcer at this end of the food chain, thanks to Shrubby and the Big Bidness People.

Of course, things could perk up... I could get a job, Megan could start getting her workers' comp, or we could win the lot-

Who to Blame...

This is *Lightning Round* Number 5, dated early October 2003, and is a not-quite-as-frequently-as-I'd-hoped fanzine from Alexander Bouchard.

The primary means of distribution for this zine will be on *efanzines.com*, the monumental contribution to the fannish good of Bill Burns, but, as I've said, I will not rule out sending deadtree copies via snailmail. Ask me.

My e-dress for electronic LoC's is *ajlbouchard@yahoo.com*. If you wish to send postal-type letters, mail to **P. O. Box 573, Hazel Park, MI 48030-0573**.

This fanzine is available for The Fannish Usual — letter of comment, article, artwork, trade for your fanzine, and the catch-all category, Editorial Whim.

Trust me — I can be *quite* whimsical.

If you insist on sending me money, I'll not turn it down.

T-shirt of the month: "I live in my own little world, but it's all right — they know me there."

Do good, avoid evil, pub your ish.

tery.

{Don't hold your breath on any of these, okay?}

Still and all, Megan and I are getting along better than we have many times during our marriage of twenty years... I can't explain it, and neither can she, but it just works out that way, and it's something we acknowledge because it is.

Whatever the reason, we're both pleased with the result.

In the meantime, we both watch the fandom scene here in Metro Detroit. ConClave still resides up in Lansing, not really considered "local" anymore... ConTraption is defunct, which some are sorry about... ConFusion will be celebrating number thirty this coming January, and PenguiCon 2.0 will be happening in the spring. (Check their new website, www.penguicon.org, for details.)

After that, the most doings seem to be in Chicago, Toronto, and Cincinnati. These cities aren't impossible to get to, but they're not close.

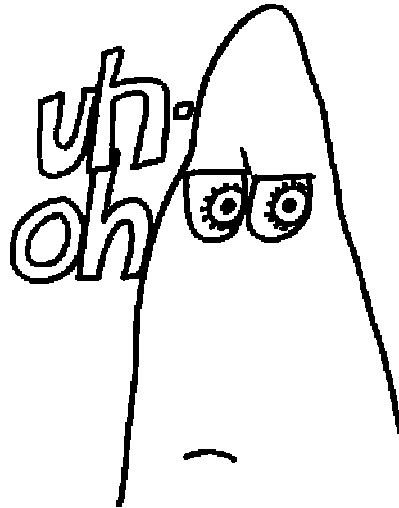
Should our fortunes improve, these destinations remain a possibility. Otherwise, other than Detroit and environs, we may have come to the end of the road.

C'est la vie, he said, with an eloquently Gallic shrug of the shoulders.



B. B. Query # 2003

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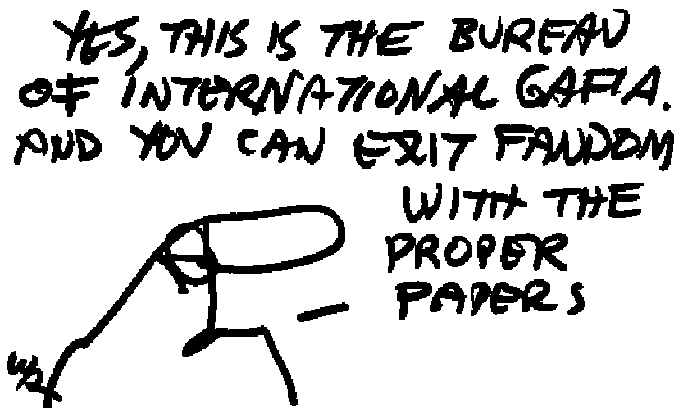
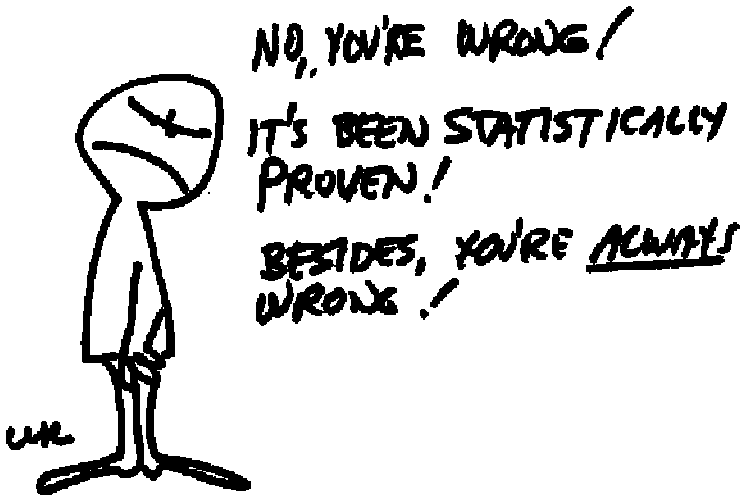


Due to circumstances partially beyond my control, the letter column will not be appearing this ish. I do wish to thank John Teehan, Henry Welch, and Lloyd Penney for their comments on #4, and I also wish to invite anyone else who wishes to comment to do so. The addresses to respond to are:

P. O. Box 573
Hazel Park MI 48030-0573

or
ajlbouchard@yahoo.com

I do appreciate it. Really.



A FEW THINGS BEFORE I GO...

Fanzines received since the last time:

Challenger 18 from Guy & Rose-Marie Lillian, P. O. Box <TK>, New Orleans LA. 7xxxx. An account of Guy & Rosie's DUFF trip, and several other adventures.

FOSFAX 208, from Tim Lane, P. O. Box <TK>, Louisville KY 3xxxx. Apparently, Tim and Liz got some kind of financial sponsorship, because here's FOSFAX again.

Peregrine Nations Vol. 3 No. 2, by Jan Stinson, <TK>, Eastlake, MI 49xxx. With the title referring, in its own way, to journeys, Jan continues her own journey to find herself in northwestern Michigan, near Manistee. Thoughtful and thought provoking.

The Knarley Knews #101, from Henry Welch, 1525 16th Ave, Grafton WI 53214. More of the saga of the Family Welch, and their hilarious adventures trying to be fannish and yet appear reasonably sane to the rest of the world.

For now, that's all from here.

See them at your DeSoto—Plymouth dealer...

tell 'em Groucho sent you!

THE SPOT

What's going on that I know about...

The listing of essential websites I would recommend for fans:

www.stilyagi.org/cons: The Stilyagi / AASFA listing of conventions around the country, with a decent search engine.

efanzines.com: Bill Burns' superlative hosting/archive of fanzines, especially for luring Earl Kemp out of the glades of GAFIA and back into fanpubbing.

www.sflovers.org: Saul Jaffe's site of resources.

www.sflovers.org/SFRG: The Science Fiction Resource Guide, maintained by Chaz Boston Baden.

wsfs.org: The home page of the World Science Fiction Society, the oversight organization which presents the Worldcon™ and sanctions the Hugo™ awards. There are links here to current Worldcon committees, and past committees too.

www.penguicon.org: The website for Penguicon 2.0.

And don't forget **ConClave** on 17-19 October in Lansing, MI, and **ConFusion** next January in Troy.

See you next time! (*Whenever that turns out to be...*)



R.B. Cleary © 2001

Next Time...
It's Personal!